\Vest The brine was evaporated either by natural gas obtained from borings in the same region, or by coal or straw. Native supplies of the precious metals are not particularly plentiful in China proper, but gold ornaments have been popular, and silver and copper have formed the basis of the Empire's currency. Copper seems to have come chiefly from Szechwan and Yunnan, and that in relatively recent times. The Chinese probably took more advantage of the available mineral resources than did any other people before the last three or four hundred years.

Yet mining in the old China faced handicaps. At times officials taxed it heavily. *Feng shui,* that strange system of pseudo-scientific superstition which has had so marked a hold on the Chinese mind, often discouraged it and even forbade it. It is only in comparison with the small use made of other than the precious metals by the rest of the world before the modern era that the Chinese appear to have learned to take advantage of their mineral deposits.

With the penetration of China by the Westerner have come further drafts on China's reserves. Raw materials in the form of minerals are among the valued prizes sought by the Occidental in his exploitation of the world. In a number of provinces Western methods of smelting iron have been introduced, by Chinese as well as by foreigners. For many years the largest output was by the Hanyehp'ing Company, long a Chinese enterprise, in Hupeh. Lately some has been coming from Anhui, the chief producer there being a Chinese company assisted by Japanese capital. All of this, however, when compared with the great plants in the

West, is very slight. Quite a little iron is derived from South Manchuria, through Japanese concerns. The extraction of coal has more than doubled in the past thirty years. There are large mines operated by modern machinery in several provinces, notably in Fengtien where, at Fushun, the Japanese have what is called the largest open pit coal mine of the world, and in Hopei, by the Kailan Mining Administration. Most of the world's supply of antimony now issues from China, chiefly from Hunan, and more than half the tungsten. In her total output of minerals, however, except in these two rare metals, China ranks low, especially in proportion to her population. Moreover, much of her coal and iron has been consumed not in China but in Japan, to whose indus-